

ants for the honor of discovering anesthesia it visited a terrible vengeance. One died brokenhearted, the second fills an unknown grave, the third died a lunatic, and the fourth committed suicide when a prisoner in jail.

One of the greatest medical discoveries of all time dragged in the mire of vilification, recrimination, bickering, and lawsuits over patent rights!

**W**E accept it as a commonplace, or perhaps with the polite curiosity we should extend to Minerva, had she sprung full-armed from the head of Jove two generations ago, and lived in the flat upstairs in the interim. We have no means of estimating what a hospital or a battlefield must have been before the era of anesthetics. No description could do it justice.

Several decades later, in 1884, Karl Koller, an oculist, switched off the pain signals leading to the central

station of the brain by applying or injecting a solution of cocaine, an alkaloid extracted from coca leaves, under the skin or into the tissues.

This has now come into such general use that when a man appears with his face swollen like a squirrel with a cheek full of nuts, holding said pouch gingerly, takes his courage in both hands, and says "Doc, yank her!" the "Doc" reaches for the little syringe. Loading this with cocaine solution, he carefully selects the most painful spots on the gum, jabs the needle "home," forces a little of the fluid in, withdraws, and repeats several times. By this time the gum has been punched so full of holes, and the victim is so exasperated with the pain, that it seems almost a heavenly relief when the dentist triumphantly yanks the offending member from its erstwhile seat of honor. They call this "Painless Dentistry"! Two of my own brothers, engaged in this ne-

farious work, assure me that it doesn't hurt them a bit. Perhaps not—or maybe I was on the wrong end of the hypo.

However, cocaine is of the greatest value in eye, ear, nose, and throat work, and to a slightly lesser extent in dentistry.

In minor surgery, particularly in the opening of abscesses and carbuncles, it is being replaced by ethyl chlorid, a preparation that destroys sensibility by temporarily freezing the parts. In this connection it is interesting to note that many years before, Larrey, in his military campaigns with Napoleon, noticed the effect of cold in diminishing sensation, and recommended that ice be employed as a local obtundent.

Our old friend the "Demon Rum" has also been in more or less favor for blunting sensibility. For those

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# GLOOM SHUNTING FOR THE BOSS

Drawings by F. Foster Lincoln

BY SEWELL FORD

**T**ROUBLE? Say, it was comin' seven diff'rent ways there for awhile,—our stocks on the slump, a quarterly bein' passed, Congress actin' up, a lot of gloom rumors floatin' around about what was goin' to happen to the tariff on steel, and the I Won't Workers pullin' off a big strike at one of our busiest plants. But all these things was side issues compared to this scrap that develops between Old Hickory and Peter K. Groff.

Maybe you don't know about Peter K? Well, he's the Mesaba agent of Corrugated affairs, the big noise at the dirt end of the dividends. It's Groff handles the ore proposition, you understand, and it's his company that does the interlocking act between the ore mines and us and the railroads.

Course, I can't give you all the details without pullin' down a subpoena from the Attorney General's office, and I ain't anxious to crowd Willie Rockefeller, or anybody like that, out of the witness chair. But I can go as far as to state that, as near as I could dope it out, Peter K. was only standin' on his rights, and if only him and Mr. Ellins could have got together for half an hour peaceable-like things could have been squared all around. We needed Groff every tick of the clock, and just because he ain't always polite in statin' his views over the wire wa'n't any first-class reason for us extendin' him an official invitation to go sew his head in a bag.

Uh-huh, them was Old Hickory's very words. I stood by while he writes the message. Then I takes it out and shows it to Piddie and grins. You should have seen Piddie's face. He turns the color of green pea soup and gasps. He's got all the fightin' qualities of a pet rabbit in him, Piddie has.

"But—that is a flat insult," says he, "and Mr. Groff is a very irascible person!"

"A which?" says I. "Never mind, though. If he's got anything on Old Hickory when it comes to pep in the disposition, he's the real Tabasco Tommy."

"But I still contend," says Piddie, "that this reply should not be sent."

"Course it shouldn't," says I. "But who's goin' to point that out to the boss? You?"

Piddie shudders. I'll bet he went home that night and told Wify to prepare for the end of the world. Course, I knew it meant a muss. But when Old Hickory's been limp' around with a gouty toe for two weeks, and his digestion's gone on the fritz, and things in gen'ral has been breakin' bad—well, it's a case of low barometer in our shop, and waitin' to see where the lightning strikes first. Might's well be pointed at Peter K., thinks I, as at some Wall Street magnate or me. Course, Groff goes up in the air a mile, threatens to resign from the board, and starts stirrin' up a minority move that's liable to end most anywhere.

Then, right in the midst of it, Old Hickory accumulates his annual case of grip, runs up a temperature that ain't got anything to do with his disposition, and his doctor gives orders for him not to move out of the house for a week.

**S**O that throws the whole thing onto me and Mr. Robert. I was takin' it calm enough too; but with Mr. Robert it's diff'rent. He has his coat off that mornin', and his hair mussed up, and he's smokin' long brunette cigars instead of his usual cigarettes. He was pawin' over things panicky.

"Hang it all!" he explodes. "Some of these papers must go up to the Governor for his indorsement. Perhaps you'd better take them, Torchy. But you're not likely to find him in a very agreeable mood, you know."

"Oh, I can dodge," says I, gatherin' up the stuff. "And what's the dope? Do I dump these on the bed and make a slide for life, or do I take out

accident insurance and then stick around for orders?"

"You may—er—stick around," says Mr. Robert. "In fact, my chief reason for sending you up to the house is the fact that at times you are apt to have a cheering effect on the Governor. So stay as long as you find any excuse."

"Gee!" says I. "I don't know whether this is a special holiday, or a sentence to sudden death. But I'll take a chance, and if the worst happens, Mr. Robert, see that Piddie wears a black arm band for me."

He indulges in the first grin he's had on for a week, and I makes my exit on that. The science of bein' fresh is to know where to quit.

**B**UT, say, that wa'n't all guff we was exchangin' about Old Hickory. I don't find him tucked away under the down comf'ables, like he ought to be. Marston, the butler, whispers the boss is in the lib'ry, and sort of shunts me in without appearin' himself. A wise guy, Marston.

For here's Mr. Ellins, wearin' a padded silk dressin' gown and old slippers, pacin' back and forth limpy and lettin' out grunts and growls at every turn. Talk about your double-distilled grouches! He looks like he'd been on a diet of mixed pickles and scrap iron for a month, and hated the whole human race.

"Well?" he snaps as he sees me edgin' in cautious.

"Papers for your O. K.," says I, holdin' the bunch out at arm's length.

"My O. K.?" he snarls. "Hah! Now what the zebra-striped Zacharias do they send those things to me for? What good am I, anyway, except as a common carrier for all the blinkety blinked aches and pains that ever existed? A shivery, shaky old lump of clay streaked with cussedness, that's all I am!"

"Yes, Sir," says I, from force of habit.

"Eh?" says he, whirlin' and snappin' his jaws.

"N-n-no, Sir," says I, sidesteppin' behind a chair.

"That's right," says he. "Dodge and squirm as if I was a wild animal. That's what they all do. What are you afraid of, Boy?"

"Me?" says I. "Why, I'm havin' the time of my life. I don't mind. It only sounds natural and homelike. And it's mostly bluff, ain't it, Mr. Ellins?"

"Discovered!" says he. "Ah, the merciless perspicacity of youth! But don't tell the others. And put those papers on my desk."

"Yes, Sir," says I, and after I've spread 'em out I backs into the bay window and sits down.



"I Got You," I Breaks in. "Out It Goes!"

"Well, what are you doing there?" says he.

"Waiting orders," says I. "Any errands, Mr. Ellins?"

"Errands?" says he. Then, after thinkin' a second, he raps out, "Yes. Do you see that collection of bottles and pills and glasses on the table? Enough to stock a young drugstore! And I've been pouring that truck into my system by wholesale,—the pink tablets on the half-hour, the white ones on the quarter, a spoonful of that purple liquid on the even hour, two of the greenish mixtures on the odd, and getting worse every day. Bah! I haven't the courage to do it myself, but by the blue-belted blazes if— See here, Boy! You're waiting orders, you say?"

"Uh-huh," says I.

"Then open that window and throw the whole lot into the areaway," says he.

"Do you mean it, Mr. Ellins?" says I.

"Do I—yah, don't I speak plain English?" he growls.

"Can't you understand a simple—"

"I got you," I breaks in. "Out it goes!" I don't drop any of it gentle, either. I slams bottles and glasses down on the flaggin' and chucks the pills into the next yard. I makes a clean sweep.

"Thanks, Torchy," says he. "The doctor will be here soon. I'll tell him you did it."

"Go as far as you like," says I. "Anything else, Sir?"

"Yes," says he. "Provide me with a temporary occupation."

"Come again," says I.

"I want something to do," says he. "Here I've been shut up in this confounded house for four mortal days! I can't read, can't eat, can't sleep. I just prow around like a bear with a sore ear. I want something that will make me forget what a wretched, futile old fool I am. Do you know of anything that will fill the bill?"

"No, Sir," says I.

"Then think," says he. "Come, where is that quick-firing, automatic intellect of yours? Think, Boy! What would you do if you were shut up like this?"

"Why," says I, "I—I might dig up some kind of games, I guess."

"Games!" says he. "That's worth considering. Well, here's some money. Go get 'em."

"But what kind, Sir?" says I.

"How the slithering Sisyphus should I know what kind?" he snaps. "Whose idea is this, anyway? You suggested games. Go get 'em, I tell you! I'll give you half an hour, while I'm looking over this stuff from the office. Just half an hour. Get out!"

**I**T'S a perfectly cute proposition, ain't it? Games for a heavy-podded old sinner like him, who's about as frivolous in his habits as one of them stone lions in front of the new city lib'ry! But here I was on my way with a yellow-backed twenty in one hand; so it's up to me to produce. I pikes straight down the avenue to a joint where they've got three floors filled with nothin' but juvenile joy junk, blows in there on the jump, nails a clerk that looks like he had more or less bean, waves the twenty at him, and remarks casual:

"Gimme the worth of that in things that'll amuse a fifty-eight-year-old kid who's sick abed and walkin' around the house."

Did I say clerk? I take it back. He was a salesman, that young gent was. Never raised an eyebrow, but proceeded to haul out samples, pass 'em up to me for inspection, and pile in a heap what I gives him the nod on. If I established a record for reckless buyin', he never mentions it. Inside of twenty minutes I'm on my way back, followed by a porter with both arms full.

"The doctor has come," says Marston. "He's in with Mr. Ellins now, Sir."

"Oh, is he?" says I. "Makes it very nice, don't it?" And, bein' as how I was Old Hickory's alibi, as you might say, I pikes right to the front.

"Here he is now," says Mr. Ellins.

And the Doc, who's a chesty, short-legged gent with a dome half under glass,—you know, sort of a skinned diamond with turf outfield effect,—he whirls on me accusin'. "Young man," says he, "do I understand that you had the impudence to—"

"Well, well!" breaks in Old Hickory, gettin' a glimpse of what the porter's unloadin'. "What have we here? Look, Hirshway,—Torchy's drug substitute!"

"Eh?" says the Doc, starin' puzzled.

"Games," says Mr. Ellins, startin' to paw over the